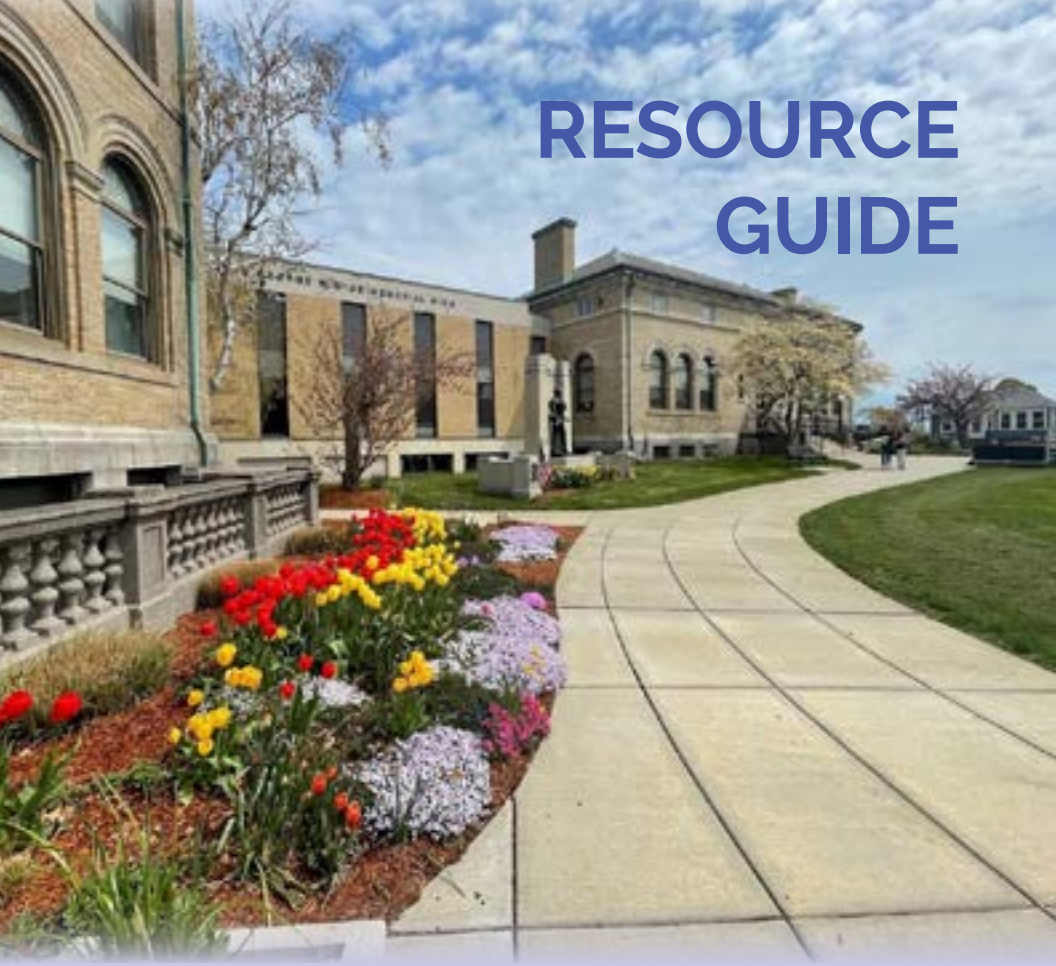

RESOURCE GUIDE

WINTHROP COMMISSION on DISABILITY

Town of Winthrop Massachusetts

MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is to increase opportunities for people with disabilities by facilitating full and equal participation in all aspects of life within the town of Winthrop. This includes reducing architectural, procedural, attitudinal, and communication barriers as well as promoting equity in housing, education, employment, transportation, and civic activities.

Our office works toward compliance with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act. We also provide information and referral, architectural access review, and advocacy on disability issues.

WELCOME TO THE WINTHROP COMMISSION ON DISABILITY RESOURCE GUIDE!

WHAT IS A COMMISSION ON DISABILITY?

Commissions on Disability are established by vote of Town Meeting to promote the inclusion and integration of persons with disabilities in the activities, services and employment opportunities or the community.

WHAT ARE THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE COMMISSION ON DISABILITY?

- Advise and assist town officials in ensuring compliance with federal and state disability laws;
- Review policies and activities of town departments and boards as they affect persons with disabilities;
- Provide information, referral, advocacy and technical assistance to individuals, businesses and organizations in all matters pertaining to disability;
- Coordinate the activities of other local groups organized to meet the needs of persons with disabilities.

HOW CAN YOU REACH THE COMMISSION ON DISABILITY?

If you have a question about services and programs for people with disabilities, contact the Commission on Disability at **commissionondisabilities@town.winthrop.ma.us**

ABOUT THIS RESOURCE GUIDE

The resources on the following pages are intended to provide the residents of Winthrop with information that pertains to people with disabilities. Winthrop can be an inclusive town which all residents can enjoy. Many of the services and programs that exist in Massachusetts are designed to support individuals with disabilities in their communities, and in their homes.

Feel free to contact us at
CommissionOnDisabilities@town.winthrop.ma.us
For more information go to
www.town.winthrop.ma.us/winthrop-commission-disabilities

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AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA)

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a civil rights law mandating equal opportunity for individuals with disabilities. This law prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities in all areas of public life, including jobs, schools, transportation, and all public and private places that are open to the general public. The purpose of the law is to make sure that people with disabilities have the same rights and opportunities as everyone else.

The ADA gives civil rights protections to individuals with disabilities like those provided to individuals without disabilities. It prohibits discrimination based on race, color, sex, national origin, age, and religion.

The ADA is divided into five titles (or sections) that relate to different areas of public life.
The ADA prohibits discrimination in:

- jobs
- public accommodations
- government services
- public transportation
- telecommunications

The ADA Coordinator for Winthrop is the Town Manager, Tony Marino.

ADVOCACY

Advocacy Groups exist to assist people in securing services and programs in many different areas, including housing, education, abuse and discrimination.

The Massachusetts Office on Disability (MOD)

MOD aims to ensure the full and equal participation of all people with disabilities in all aspects of life. MOD offers training services, advocacy on variety of disability-related issues, monitoring compliance with disability rights and additional resources such as information on government programs. For more information, go to **https://www.mass.gov/orgs/massachusetts-office-on-disability**

Disability Law Center (DLC)

DLC is committed to protecting the civil and human rights of ALL persons with disabilities through zealous advocacy and representation. Its work is firmly rooted in the belief that everyone deserves to be treated with respect and dignity. The guiding principles for DLC's advocacy are to promote and protect inclusion, independence, integration, and equal opportunity. For more information, go to **https://www.dlc-ma.org**

Disabled Persons Protection Commission (DPPC)

DPPC protects adults with disabilities from the abusive acts or omissions of their caregivers through investigation, oversight, public awareness, and prevention.

In cases of suspected physical, emotional and sexual abuse or neglect of a person with a disability, the DPPC:

- Receives and screens reports of suspected abuse, neglect and deaths through a 24-Hour Hotline
- Conducts investigations
- Oversees investigations conducted on DPPC's behalf by other state agencies: Department of Developmental Services (DDS), Department of Mental Health (DMH) and the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC)
- Ensures that the appropriate protective services are provided when abuse has been substantiated or risk is determined

- Provides training and education for service providers, law enforcement personnel and the public
- Provides assistance to the public in clarifying the presence of abuse and neglect
- Maintains DPPC Abuser Registry

For more information on the DPPC, go to **https://www.mass.gov/service-details/overview**

Federation for Children with Special Needs (FCSN)

The Federation empowers families so that they have the information and resources they need for their children. The organization works with families with children from birth to adulthood, providing individual assistance, training, and leadership development and support. FCSN focuses on education, early intervention, health care, transitions, children in foster care and group homes, and building strong family engagement to support all children, especially those children with disabilities, those at risk, and those with economic, cultural or linguistic barriers. For more information, go to **https://fcsn.org**

Massachusetts Advocates for Children (MAC)

Massachusetts Advocates for Children's mission is to remove barriers to educational and life opportunities for children and youth. MAC does so by advocating for and partnering with students and families; transforming school cultures to be inclusive, safe and supportive; and creating systemic change so all children and youth can learn, reach their potential, and thrive.

MAC focuses its advocacy on children and youth who face significant barriers, inequities, and/or discrimination because of their economic status, disability, race, ethnicity/culture, immigration status, English Learner status, and/or traumatic life experiences. For more information, go to **https://www.massadvocates.org**

Massachusetts Association for Community Action (MASSCAP)

Massachusetts Association for Community Action (MASSCAP) is a statewide association of the 24 Community Action Agencies (CAAs) operating in Massachusetts. CAAs are human service and advocacy organizations that are dedicated to fighting poverty and promoting self-sufficiency. For more information, go to **https://www.masscap.org.**

MassHealth Disability Accommodation Ombudsman

The MassHealth Ombudsman helps MassHealth members and applicants with disabilities receive the accommodations they need for effective communication with MassHealth. Voice: Call MassHealth Disability Accommodation Ombudsman, Voice: at (617) 847-3468; TDD/TTY: Call MassHealth Disability Accommodation Ombudsman, TDD/TTY: at (617) 847-3788; Email MassHealth Disability Accommodation Ombudsman at **ADAAccommodations@state.ma.us**

My Ombudsman

My Ombudsman is an independent program for MassHealth members who are enrolled in MassHealth managed and integrated care plans. My Ombudsman can help enrolled members understand the benefits and services offered through their MassHealth health plan; answer member questions or address concerns; help to mediate or otherwise find resolutions for members who are having difficulty accessing their benefits; and help explain member rights, including the right to appeal or file a grievance. Many My Ombudsman staff also have lived experience with disability and personal experience being enrolled in a MassHealth health plan. You can contact My Ombudsman directly via phone at 855.781.9898; Videophone (VP) at 339-224-6831; email at: **info@myombudsman.org**; or visit their website at for more information at: **https://myombudsman.org/**

Options Counseling

Options Counseling is a free, short-term service to assist you or a loved one with options and resources available to help you. An Options Counselor can meet or speak with you to help with needs you have now or if you are planning for the future. Options Counselors can provide information on the range of resources available and ensure that you, your family or caregiver understand the options, can make an informed choice, and decide the next step to take. https://www.mass.gov/service-details/options-counseling-program

Client Assistance Program (CAP)

CAP's main responsibilities are:

- Individual Advocacy: Providing information and advocacy to support applicants or consumers who are facing barriers to Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) or Independent Living (IL) services
- Education and Outreach
- Educating the public (including unserved and underserved populations) about VR and IL services that exist
- Providing information about disability rights in employment through Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act
- Systemic Improvements: Identifying systemic problems in VR and IL and working to resolve them, through interactions with the programs and participation in advisory boards

CAP does not provide VR or IL services. Our role is to advocate for the consumers of those services. Learn more about CAP at https://www.mass.gov/info-details/mods-client-assistance-program or call or email contact CAPMA@mass.gov, or MOD's main number: (617) 727-7440.

Disability and low-income benefits

Disability benefits are cash payments for people who can't work because of a disability. You could receive benefits from a number of sources including the federal or state government or an insurance company (as an employment benefit or because you bought a policy privately). Eligibility may depend on how much you are able to work, when you stopped working, how long the disability is expected to last, whether you have paid into the insurance program for long enough, how old you are and what other income or assets you have.

As well as disability benefits, there are other financial assistance programs for people with very low income and/or assets.

Each program is likely to have different eligibility criteria. Usually, you have to apply to each program separately, however occasionally you can apply for multiple programs through one application or use proof of eligibility for one program to simplify the application for another program.

For information about services available to people with disabilities and seniors, contact MassOptions at https://www.massoptions.org/massoptions (phone: (800) 243-4636).

Long term federal benefits: SSDI and SSI

The Social Security Administration (SSA) pays disability benefits to adults of working age who "have a physical or mental condition that prevents them from working and is expected to last at least a year or result in death." SSA uses a different definition to evaluate disabled children who may also be eligible for disability cash benefits if their household has low income.

The two most common SSA programs that offer benefits to those who qualify are:

- The Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) program - If you've paid Social Security taxes long

enough to achieve enough work credits, SSDI may be available to you. Note that local and state government employees usually do not pay the Social Security contributions required for SSDI.

- The Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program - If you have limited income and assets, SSI may be available to you.

Nowadays there is one joint application process for these, however the process is quite lengthy, so it can be useful to learn a bit before starting. There is a lot of useful information on the Social Security Administration (SSA) website. Here are a few specific items that might be useful:

- The SSA page for disability benefits: **https://www.ssa.gov/benefits/disability.** This page includes a list of what information you will need and a very brief overview of the process. It includes a link to a booklet on disability benefits that lists the five-step evaluation process (page 6). This can help in understanding why applications for SSDI take a long time and many are initially denied – many people assume that if their doctor says they have a disability they will qualify for SSDI, but the actual evaluation process looks at the applicant's functional limitations and options for alternative employment rather than their diagnosis/prognosis.
- Various publications, including Benefits for Children with Disabilities, Disability Benefits For Wounded Warriors, If You Are Blind Or Have Low Vision - How We Can Help, and many other topics: **https://www.ssa.gov/pubs/?topic=Disability**

The SSA contact page https://www.ssa.gov/agency/contact/: where you can look up your local office and online services. The SSA national phone number is (800) 772-1213.

DDS: Disability Determination Services

The Social Security Administration uses a separate agency to determine initial and continued eligibility for Social Security disability benefits programs: Disability Determination Services (DDS) at Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission. As part of their evaluation, they may require you to attend a medical appointment. You can contact DDS at (800) 882-2040 (Boston) or go online https://www.mass.gov/service-details/mrc-disability-determination-services-dds

Massachusetts financial assistance PFML: Paid Family and Medical Leave

From January 2021, the Department of Paid Family Medical Leave offers a cash benefit to Massachusetts employees who need to take paid leave for medical or family reasons. Most employers participate in the program, but there are exceptions and opt-in/opt-out options, so check if your employer participates. Find out more at Paid Family and Medical Leave (PFML) at https://www.mass.gov/info-details/paid-family-and-medical-leave-pfml-overview-and-benefits or (833) 344-7365.

SSP: State Supplement Program

If you qualify for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) from the federal government, you may be able to receive supplementary benefits from the state. The state agency that administers the supplement is the Massachusetts State Supplement Program (SSP) https://www.mass.gov/massachusetts-state-supplement-program-ssp. You can contact SSP at (877) 863-1128.

DTA: Department of Transitional Assistance

The Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) provides cash benefits to certain people with very low income and assets. DTA administers:

- Emergency Aid for the Elderly, Disabled and Children (EAEDC) - people with very low income and assets who are unable to work for a medical reason for at least 60 days may be eligible. This

is a potential source of income while a person is awaiting a decision on a SSA benefit claim. EAEDC can also cover people needing to stay home to care for someone who would otherwise need to move into an institution. For more information go to https://www.mass.gov/service-details/check-eaedc-eligibility-and-how-to-apply

Transitional Aid to Families with Dependent Children (TAFDC), a state and federally funded program that provides cash assistance to families with children and pregnant women in the last 120 days of pregnancy who have little or no assets or income. For more information go to https://www.mass.gov/how-to/apply-for-tafdc

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly known as the food stamp program. More information about SNAP can be found on Project Bread's website and food source hotline: (800) 645-8333. For more information go to https://www.mass.gov/snap-benefits-formerly-food-stamps
You can contact the DTA at (877) 382-2363.

Assistance with Heating

If your household income is below a certain level, you may be eligible for Fuel Assistance to help pay for heating during the winter. You must apply to

your local Fuel Assistance agency each year, but after the first year they should send you an application. You can usually only apply between November and April. There are also programs to help with emergency heating system repair and home weatherization. Find out more about Home Energy Assistance Programs. https://www.mass.gov/home-energy-assistance-programs. In Winthrop, for fuel assistance contact Community Action Programs Inter-City, Inc. (CAPIC) at https://capicinc.org/fuel-assistance/ CAPIC also has representatives come periodically to the Winthrop Council on Aging to assist individuals in applying to the program.

Utility Rates

Reduced utility rates are available for households on low income or receiving certain benefits. If the bills are in your name, you can simply call your gas and electricity company and ask them to give you the low-income rate. They will probably need you to send proof of income or that you are on low-income benefit. These rates can be 25% lower than normal rates. https://www.mass.gov/info-details/help-paying-your-utility-bill#am-i-eligible-for-a-discount-rate-or-other-payment-option?-

Phone or Internet

The Lifeline program connects you to local telephone companies who provide discounted phone or internet service for people on low income. You fill in an application form and once eligible, can choose from a limited number of phone/internet companies, or you

may be able to apply the Lifeline benefit to a service you are already using. https://www.lifelinesupport.org/

Housing

Housing in Massachusetts is expensive and it is often a person's largest monthly expense. Obtaining financial assistance for housing can take years, but if you think you will need it, you might want to get on waitlists. https://www.mass.gov/info-details/housing-resources-for-people-with-disabilities#housing-search-

Tax Preparation Help

The VITA program provides free tax return preparation help for people on low income. https://www.masscap.org/freetaxprep/free-tax-prep-vita-directory/

COMMUNICATION

State and local governments, businesses and nonprofit organizations that serve the public have an obligation to communicate effectively with people who have communication disabilities. The goal is to ensure that communication with people with these disabilities is equally effective as communication with people without disabilities.

The American with Disabilities Act (ADA) uses the term "auxiliary aids and services" ("aids and services") to refer to the ways to communicate with people who have communication disabilities.

- For people who are blind, have vision loss, or are deaf-blind, this includes providing a qualified reader; information in large print, Braille, or electronically for use with a computer screen-reading program; or an audio recording of printed information. A "qualified" reader means someone who can read effectively, accurately, and impartially, using any necessary specialized vocabulary.

- For people who are deaf, have hearing loss, or are deaf-blind, this includes providing a qualified notetaker; a qualified sign language interpreter, oral interpreter, cued-speech interpreter, or tactile interpreter; real-time captioning; written materials; or a printed script of a stock speech

(such as given on a museum or historic house tour). A "qualified" interpreter means someone who is able to interpret effectively, accurately, and impartially, both receptively (i.e., understanding what the person with the disability is saying) and expressively (i.e., having the skill needed to convey information back to that person) using any necessary specialized vocabulary.

- For people who have speech disabilities, this may include providing a qualified speech-to-speech transliterator (a person trained to recognize unclear

speech and repeat it clearly), especially if the person will be speaking at length, such as giving testimony in court, or just taking more time to communicate with someone who uses a communication board. In some situations, keeping paper and pencil on hand so the person can write out words that staff cannot understand or simply allowing more time to communicate with someone who uses a communication board or device may provide

effective communication. Staff should always listen attentively and not be afraid or embarrassed to ask the person to repeat a word or phrase they do not understand.

- In addition, aids and services include a wide variety of technologies including 1) assistive listening systems and devices; 2) open captioning, closed captioning, real-time captioning, and closed caption decoders and devices; 3) telephone handset amplifiers, hearing-aid compatible telephones, text telephones (TTYs) , videophones, captioned telephones, and other voice, text, and video-based telecommunications products; 4) videotext displays; 5) screen reader software, magnification software, and optical readers; 6) video description and secondary auditory programming (SAP) devices that pick up video-described audio feeds for television programs; 7) accessibility features in electronic documents and other electronic and information technology that is accessible (either independently or through assistive technology such as screen readers).

For a comprehensive list of accommodations for communication, go to **https://www.ada.gov/resources/effective-communication**

For information on effective communication, go to **https://www.ada.gov/resources/effective-communication**

COUNCIL ON AGING (COA)

The Council on Aging encourages and promotes, through activities, programs, and services, independence to enhance the quality of life, and the dignity of all seniors that live within the community.

The Council on Aging is a multi-faceted agency addressing issues of concern to the senior population. At the Robert A. DeLeo Senior Center, we offer a wide array of programs and activities ranging from fitness and health classes to foreign language lessons, trips and tours around the region and much more. We also provide, and host, numerous services, including transportation to and from medical appointments, legal aid and health insurance assistance.

For more information on Winthrop's Council on Aging, go to **https://www.town.winthrop.ma.us/council-aging**, or call (617) 846-8538. The COA is located at Robert A. DeLeo Senior Center, 35 Harvard Street, Winthrop.

DISABILITY RIGHTS & AWARENESS

The Massachusetts Office on Disability (MOD) can help you understand how disability laws and regulations may or may not apply in your situation, including your rights, responsibilities and options for recourse. MOD focuses on answering questions around barriers to participation for people with disabilities.

For vocational rehabilitation (VR) and independent living (IL) services, MOD refers people to the organizations that specialize in these services. The Client Assistance Program (CAP) provides confidential and neutral support for people who have questions and concerns about their VR/IL services or their rights.

See the Advocacy section in this directory for a full description of agencies and organizations that assist people with disabilities in exercising their rights.

INTERACTING WITH PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES
From the Massachusetts Office on Disability

Remember, a disability is not a handicap, attitudes are. Sometimes people without disabilities feel awkward and don't know what to say or how to act around a person with a disability.

Remember that people with disabilities are people first. The disability does not define the person.

People with disabilities have goals, dreams, wants and desires. The need for love, appreciation, fun, respect, and the opportunity to be productive and valued are the same for people with and without disabilities.

It is important to use language and actions that avoid stereotyping people in inappropriate ways.

General Do's and Do Not's

The following examples are designed to increase your comfort level when speaking or interacting with people who have disabilities. If you do not know what to do or say, ASK. Allow the person with the disability to assist you.

Always put the person first. Make reference to the person first, then the disability. If the disability is not relevant, there is no need to mention it.
Talk about the disability if it comes up naturally. Don't pry. Be guided by the wishes of the person with the disability.

When in doubt, ask if you can help. Don't hover. If assistance is needed then you can offer. Take the answer that is given and follow-up with "if you need assistance I'll be here".

Remember a person who has a disability isn't necessarily chronically sick or unhealthy. People with disabilities are not conditions or diseases.

Do not label people with disabilities as poor, superhuman, courageous, or unfortunate.

Be careful not to assume that a person with one disability also has others. For example, a person who uses a wheelchair does not necessarily have a mental disability, nor is a person who is blind likely to have a hearing impairment.

There is no need to discourage children from asking questions about people with disabilities. Open communication helps overcome fear of the unknown and prevents misleading attitudes.

Don't make assumptions about what a person can and cannot do.

Avoid using trendy phrases such as "handicappable" or "physically challenged" to describe people with disabilities. They can be patronizing and inaccurate. It is best to use simple language such as "people with disabilities."

Overcome your fear of the unknown. Sometimes people don't help people who have disabilities because they're afraid of doing or saying the wrong thing.

When planning events always check that you have ensured physical and communication access.

Be yourself and use common sense. Use a normal tone of voice.

When talking to a person who has a disability, speak directly to that person, not through their friend, companion, parents or interpreter.

Speak as you would normally speak. There is no need to avoid common expressions such as “see ya later”, “gotta run”, or “did you hear the one about... “ that seem to relate to the person’s disability. Being overly conscious of a person’s disability can cause discomfort and awkwardness.

Help break down the barriers. Seek to understand and educate yourself and others about disabilities.

Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC)

A SEPAC is a Special Education Parent Advisory Council. Every public school district in Massachusetts is required to establish a SEPAC. Massachusetts state law assigns both an advisory and participatory function to SEPACs. Membership is offered to all parents of children with disabilities and other interested parties. Contact the Special Education Office to contact the SEPAC.

MassPAC is a project of the Federation for Children with Special Needs which supports SEPACs – both volunteer parent leaders and school district

administrators to build effective parent-school partnerships to support family engagement. For more information go to https://fcsn.org/masspac

Summary of Education laws (504, IDEA, DESE Regulations)

Under the IDEA and Massachusetts special education laws, children with disabilities have the right to a "free appropriate public education," often referred to as "FAPE." FAPE requires that a student's IEP be tailored to address the student's unique needs in a way that is reasonably calculated to enable the student to make meaningful and effective educational progress.

Children with disabilities are entitled to special education services under both federal and state laws. Massachusetts has enacted its own statutes which govern the rights of disabled children in this state. Under these laws, children ages three through twenty-one who have not attained a high school diploma are potentially eligible to receive special education services. For An Overview of Massachusetts Special Education Laws, go to https://www.mass.gov/info-details/massachusetts-law-about-special-education

Early Intervention

Massachusetts Early Intervention (EI) is a program for infants and toddlers (birth to 3 years old) who have developmental delays or are at risk of a developmental delay. We serve Massachusetts

families with children under the age of three who are not reaching age-appropriate milestones, diagnosed with certain conditions, or have medical or social histories which may put them at risk for a developmental delay. EI services are meant to help support families and caregivers and to enhance the development and learning of infants and toddlers. For more information, go to **https://www.mass.gov/orgs/early-intervention-division**

Winthrop Parents Network

The primary purpose of this program is to promote early literacy, parenting education, developmental screenings, resources and referrals for families with children birth to age 8. This goal is achieved through collaboration with the public schools, private preschools, Early Intervention and other agencies that provide services to families. There is a wonderful and comprehensive resource guide for families on the website. For more information, go to **https://sites.google.com/winthrop.k12.ma.us/wpn/home?authuser=0**

Department of Developmental Services (DDS)

The Department of Developmental Services provides supports for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities including Autism Spectrum Disorder to enhance opportunities to become fully engaged members of their community.

The Department's mission is to create, in partnership with others, innovative and genuine opportunities for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities to participate fully in their communities and meaningfully engage as valued members. DDS works with adults to connect them with an array of employment and day program supports, community living and other residential aid, and family support. DDS works with children to provide family support and supplement educational services through specialized programs.

Services are individualized and planned using a person-centered approach. For more information, go to **https://www.mass.gov/orgs/department-of-developmental-services**

Winthrop is served by the DDS Greater Boston Area Office located in Hyde Park which can be reached at 617-363-2900.

The Catastrophic Illness in Children Relief Fund

This fund was established to help families bear the excessive financial burdens associated with the care of children with special health care needs and disabilities.

For more information, call Division for Special Health Needs Community Support Line at 1-800-882-1435 or go to www.mass.gov/eohhs/gov/departments/dph/programs/family-health/cicrf

Federation for Children with Special Needs (FCSN)

The Federation empowers families so that they have the information and resources they need for their children. The organization works with families with children from birth to adulthood, providing individual assistance, training, and leadership development and support. FCSN focuses on education, early intervention, health care, transitions, children in foster care and group homes, and building strong family engagement to support all children, especially those children with disabilities, those at risk, and those with economic, cultural, or linguistic barriers. For more information, go to https://fcsn.org or call (617) 236-7210 or 800-331-0688.

Children's Autism Spectrum Disorders Waiver

This Waiver program provides one-to-one behavioral, social and communication based interventions and related support services to MassHealth-eligible children with autism, birth through age eight.
The Children's Autism Waiver is operated by the Department of Developmental Services. www.mass.gov/service-details/dds-autism-waiver-service-program-overview

Department of Mental Health (DMH)

DMH is one of the state agencies that work with providers and health plans to help people in Massachusetts with their mental health related needs.

For a comprehensive list of services provided through DMH, go to https://www.mass.gov/service-details/dmh-child-youth-and-family-services-overview. The office serving Winthrop is located at 85 East Newton Street, Boston, MA 02118; Phone (617) 626-9200; Fax (617) 626-9216; TTY (617) 626-9257; Child/Adolescent TTY (617) 626-9252.

Office of Children, Youth and Family Programs

The Children, Youth and Families (CYF) Cluster oversees the policies and programs of the Department of Transitional Assistance, the Department of Youth Services, the Department of Children and Families, and the Office for Refugees and Immigrants. CYF supports a vision that all young people grow up to be healthy, caring and economically self-sufficient adults. Through

partnerships with local municipalities, community based organizations, federal and state agencies, CYF manages or supports the following programs:

- Safe and Successful Youth Initiative
- Unaccompanied Homeless Youth Commission
- Families and Children Requiring Assistance Advisory Board
- Mass 2-1-1: Information and Referral Resource for Families and Children Requiring Assistance
- Family Resource Centers
- Massachusetts Young Children's Health Interventions for Learning and Development (MYCHILD)
- Statewide Trauma Network
- Marijuana Law (2008 Ballot Question 2) Community Service Program
- Children Awaiting Resolution of Disposition (CARD) Reports
- Governor's Statewide Youth Council
- Domestic Violence Prevention and Intervention
- Unified Planning Teams

For more information, go to **https://www.mass.gov/orgs/office-of-children-youth-and-family-programs**

In-Home Treatment for Children and Adolescents

In-home treatment is available to children and adolescents with mental health conditions through the Department of Mental Health. Intensive Home-Based Therapeutic Care (IHBTC) is a treatment service for youth (ages 6-22 years) and their families. The goal

of IHBTC is to work with the youth and family in the home, and to prevent or help shorten the length of out of home treatment interventions, should it become necessary. To learn more about DMH programs, go to https://www.mass.gov/service-details/dmh-child-youth-and-family-services-overview

Massachusetts Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment Initiative (MAICEI)

MAICEI offers grants to college-school partnerships to support eligible public high school students with intellectual disabilities, ages 18–22, to increase their academic and career success by being included in a college or university community of learners.

The Community of Inclusive Scholars Program at Salem State University is a MAICEI Program. Opening

its doors in the Spring of 2017, the Community of Inclusive Scholars Program offers a "college experience" to high school students with Intellectual Disabilities or Autism Spectrum Disorders from partnering school districts. MAICEI students are 18–22 years old, are unable to pass the MCAS exams or have passed MCAS but still qualify for special education services, are currently on an IEP, and are enrolled in a partnership district. For more information, go to **https://www.salemstate.edu/cis**

911 Disability Indicator Form

The disability indicator program is voluntary for both the community and its residents and was created by a group of several different organizations representing the mobility, hearing, speech and sight impaired communities.

The information provided on the disability indicator form enables a special code to appear on the 911 call takers screen which alerts the call taker that a person residing at that address may require special assistance during an emergency.

When your 911 call is answered by the Metro North Regional Emergency Communication Center, the 911 system automatically displays your name, address and telephone number on the dispatcher's screen. At your request, codes will be displayed that will identify the disability indicators that have been reported for you or someone living with you at your address. These codes will help the dispatcher communicate with the caller and provide useful information to responding public safety personnel.

A standardized form was created to encourage participation from all persons with disabilities. As you are aware, there are an extensive range of disabilities

and medical conditions. The disability indicator categories listed on the form may be considered too broad for some when you consider the extensive range of disabilities; however, information requested on the form must remain sensitive to those who may not wish to provide detailed information.

Always remember information on the disability indicator form is confidential. The information you provide will only appear at the dispatcher's location when a 911 call originates from your address.
To download the 911 Disability Indicator Form, go to **https://winthroppublicsafety.com/911-disability-indicator-form**

Code Red

The Town of Winthrop has instituted the CodeRED Emergency Notification System: an ultra high-speed telephone communication service for emergency notifications. This system allows us to telephone all or targeted areas of the Town in case of an emergency situation that requires immediate action (such as a boil-water notice, missing child or evacuation notices).

The system is capable of dialing 60,000 phone numbers per hour. It then delivers our recorded message to a live person or an answering machine, making three (3) attempts to connect to any number. To enroll in Code Red, go to **https://winthroppublicsafety.com/code-red**

Text-to-911

On December 14, 2018, Text-to-911 was deployed across Massachusetts. This is one of the most exciting changes for accessibility to emergency services in more than 20 years.

When a citizen sends a text message to 911, it will be routed to an emergency call center based on the location information provided by the carrier. For this reason, when a citizen sends a Text-to-911, they should make every effort to text the town name, address or location that they are located in.

What is Text-to-911?

Text-to-911 is the ability to send a text message to reach 9-1-1 emergency call takers from your mobile device.

How Do I Reach Text-to-911?

When using a texting app on a device, type the numbers "911" into the "To" or "Recipient" field.

What Information Should I Give Text-to-911?

You should make every effort to text the following:

- location including the address/location and town name;
- what is happening (nature of the incident);
- any additional details about the location you can provide such as landmarks, cross streets, nearby business names, apartment number, floor, room or suite numbers, or any details that may be helpful in locating you.

When Should I Use Text-to-911?

Texting should only be used during an emergency when you are unable to make a voice call to 911. Making a voice call is the most efficient way to get access to emergency services.

Text-to-911 will be useful for citizens who are deaf, hard of hearing, or speech impaired. Text-to-911 eliminates the need to use ancillary Teletypewriter (TTY) equipment, or third-party services to access 911.

For more information about Text-to-911, go to **https://www.mass.gov/info-details/text-to-911-public-information?_gl=1*1x5a3gk*_ga*MTU1MTcyNTU0MS4xNjUzMzU5OTAz*_ga**

Disability Rights in Employment

There are federal and state laws in place to protect people with disabilities from discrimination in employment. These laws aim to remove barriers, uphold equal access, and create an equitable workplace. For information on employment protection and accommodations for individuals with disabilities, go to: https://www.mass.gov/info-details/disability-rights-in-employment. This page outlines the civil rights protections for employees with disabilities, obligations for employers, and recourse options.

Statewide Employment Services (SES)

SES programs provide support to help people with the most severe disabilities choose, get and keep a job. Long-term support can help people get paid fairly to work in a job that matches their skills and interests. Some of these programs include:

Project IMPACT

Project IMPACT provides personal benefit counseling to people that get Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and/or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and are employed or looking for a job. This can help individuals with disabilities understand what may happen when they go to work or increase earnings. For more information on Project IMPACT please contact Joseph Reale at (617) 204-3854 or Joseph.Reale@mrc.state.ma.us.

Vocational Rehabilitation

If you're interested in employment and could use supports, explore the vocational rehabilitation (VR) services offered by the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC). You can by going to https://massmrc.hylandcloud.com/customcode/mrconemrc

The Massachusetts Commission for the Blind (MCB) also offers vocational rehabilitation services. https://www.mass.gov/vocational-rehabilitation-vr.

HANDICAPPED PARKING

Parking spaces in Winthrop are at a premium and use of all driveways is encouraged.

A doctor's letter must accompany all applications and must state the nature and severity of the disability. The letter must be dated within six months of the application date. A copy of the Handicapped Placard and a copy of the applicant's Massachusetts registration must accompany the application. Handicapped reserved parking spaces are not exempt from snow emergency parking regulations.

Winthrop Shore Drive is under the jurisdiction of the DCR (formerly MDC).

Winthrop Housing Authority has their own set of rules and the Town may not grant reserved spaces on their property.

Single family dwellings with a driveway will not qualify for a Handicapped reserved space in front of their home, unless there is some obstacle that would prohibit use by the disabled party (i.e. extreme slope, etc.)

Two and three family dwellings are encouraged to make full use of all available parking spaces. If a space is requested, a letter from the owner of the property giving permission, to the tenant, for a

reserved space must accompany the application. As with all rules and regulations, there may be exceptions. These exceptions will be handled on a case by case basis.

All reserved spaces are approved for two (2) years. After that time, they will be reviewed.

If a resident moves, and no longer requires the designated spot, it is expected that you will notify the Town of Winthrop, that the spot is no longer needed and the signage should be removed.

Reserved Handicapped Parking Spots are non-transferable between individuals. A new application must be submitted.

Reserved parking spots are for the permanently disabled, a temporary request will only be accepted if the applicant agrees to pay the full cost of setup and removal of the sign.

This program isn't governed by any federal or state laws. It's managed by the Disabilities Commission and the Transportation Department. The Disabilities Commission has the right to approve or deny any applications.

For more information, go to **https://www.town.winthrop.ma.us/handicapped-parking-committee/pages/rules-regulations**

SHINE PROGRAM
(Serving the Health Insurance Needs of Everyone)

Shine provides free health insurance information and counseling to all Massachusetts residents with Medicare and their caregivers. People who have Medicare or who are about to become eligible for Medicare can meet with a counselor to learn about benefits and options available. A counselor will review programs that help people with limited income to pay health care costs. To connect with a local SHINE counselor, visit the Council on Aging in Winthrop. For more information call 617-846-8538.

MassHealth

MassHealth provides health benefits and helps pay for them for qualifying children, families, seniors, and people with disabilities living in Massachusetts. We may offer benefits directly or help pay for all or part of your health insurance premiums. If you are a member, you may have access to doctor visits, dental, prescription drugs, behavioral health services, and other important health care services. People with disabilities living at home (children as well as adults) who need more help than family members can give, may be able to get certain long-term-care services to help them remain at home.

MassHealth also offers long-term-care services at either a medical institution or in your home through a program known as Home- and Community-based Services Waivers (HCBS).

If you are eligible for MassHealth, you can also receive Personal Care Attendant (PCA) services or Adult Family Care (AFC) services. See "In-Home Supports" in this directory.

For more information go to **https://www.mass.gov/orgs/masshealth**

MassHealth Premium Assistance (PA)

The MassHealth Premium Assistance (PA) program is for MassHealth members who have access to employer-sponsored health insurance (ESI) from a job or from another source, such as members of your

household. If you have MassHealth and have access to ESI, you may be able to get help paying for your share of the health insurance premium if you qualify for the PA program. MassHealth may also assist with other out-of-pocket costs such as copayments, deductibles, and coinsurance, so that having ESI should not cost you more than when you only had MassHealth.

In addition to helping you pay for ESI, the PA program can help you in the following ways:

- You may have more benefits by getting insurance both through your job and through MassHealth than just through MassHealth alone. For example, your employer's health plan may provide access to more healthcare providers, additional paid services, and even wellness programs.
- Family members who are not eligible for MassHealth may be able to get ESI at little to no cost when other family members have MassHealth.
- If you have MassHealth CommonHealth with a high premium, PA can reduce or eliminate the cost of your CommonHealth premium if you get private health insurance through your job or family.
- If you lose your MassHealth eligibility, you can keep your ESI so you will not go without health insurance. Please note that if you lose your MassHealth coverage, your PA benefits will also end, so you will be responsible for any ESI premiums after the end of your MassHealth coverage.

For more information, go to **https://www.mass.gov/info-details/masshealth-premium-assistance-pa**

Medicare

Medicare is a federal program that provides health insurance coverage for adults 65 or older, younger people with disabilities and people with end stage renal disease. Medicare.gov is a US Government website that can provide you with more information about Medicare. It tells you how to enroll, choose a health plan, and manage your benefits.

More than 64 million Americans depend on Medicare for access to the health care services they need, yet many still struggle to pay medical bills. In 2018, according to one study, people with traditional Medicare spent an average of $6,168 for health care—nearly half of which (47 percent) went toward premiums alone—and 1 in 10 beneficiaries spent at least 52 percent of their income on health care.

Research has long shown that such costs lead enrollees to delay or skip needed care. A crucial yet often overlooked government resource—the Medicare Savings Programs (MSPs)—could help ease this burden. Under MSPs, state Medicaid agencies pay Medicare premiums, deductibles, copayments, and other out-of-pocket costs for older adults with limited incomes and resources.

Massachusetts included $73.2 million in its 2023 budget to expand MSPs to cover individuals with incomes up to 225 percent of the federal poverty limit (FPL), which the state estimates will enable

approximately 65,000 additional Massachusetts residents to now qualify. For more information on Medicare eligibility and changing regulations, go to https://www.aarp.org/health/medicare-insurance/info-2023/medicare-changes-in-2023.html

Prescription Advantage

Prescription Advantage provides prescription drug coverage for Massachusetts residents age 65 and older, as well as younger people with disabilities who meet income and employment guidelines.

The Massachusetts Health Connector

The Massachusetts Health Connector is the state's health insurance marketplace. You can shop for health insurance online and apply for insurance subsidies on the Massachusetts Health Connector website at https://www.mahealthconnector.org/ or call 1-877-MA-ENROLL (1-877-623-6765), or TTY 1-877-623-7773 for persons with a hearing or speech disability.

ICO Plan

Integrated Care Options (ICO) is a comprehensive health plan that covers services normally paid for through Medicare and MassHealth. It is also referred to as One Care. It combines health services with social support services by coordinating care and specialized support services. There are no copays for enrolled members enrolled. One Care is an integrated care option for dual-eligible individuals (those who

have Medicare and MassHealth) ages 21-64 (at the time of enrollment) who are living with disabilities. One Care covers all of a member's Medicare, MassHealth, and prescription drug benefits. For more information, go to https://www.mass.gov/one-care

PACE

The Program of All-inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE) is administered by MassHealth and Medicare to provide a wide range of medical, social, recreational, and wellness services to eligible participants. The goal of PACE is to allow participants to live safely in their homes instead of in nursing homes. For more information, go to https://www.mass.gov/program-of-all-inclusive-care-for-the-elderly-pace

SCO Plan

Senior Care Options (SCO) is a comprehensive health plan that covers all the services normally paid for through Medicare and MassHealth. This plan provides services to members through a senior care organization and its network of providers. It combines health services with social support services by coordinating care and specialized geriatric support services, along with respite care for families and caregivers. SCO offers an important advantage for eligible members over traditional fee-for-service care. There are no copays for enrolled members enrolled. You can learn more at https://www.mass.gov/senior-care-options-sco

HOME MODIFICATION PROGRAMS

Home modification programs can help you modify your home for yourself or your loved one so they can remain in their home instead of going into a nursing home. Funding can also be used to modify your home for your child or young adult with a disability to remain safe at home and be more independent.

Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) Home Modification Resources

Independent Living Center: Title VII Part B
In Massachusetts, federal money from Title VII Part B funding is made available to many of the Independent Living Centers (ILC) in Massachusetts for the purchase of equipment and services to assist people to maintain or achieve independence. For more information, please contact your ILC or contact MRC at (617)-204-3628

Home Modification Loan Program

The Home Modification Loan Program provides low- and no-interest loans to modify the homes of elders, adults and children with disabilities. Such home modifications allow individuals with disabilities to remain in their homes and live independently in their communities. Any homeowner who has a disability or has a household member who has a disability, or rents to an individual with a disability may apply for this loan. Contact: Susan Gillam at 1-866-500-5599 or via email at **sgillam@cedac.org** or visit the website for more information **www.mass.gov/mrc/hmlp**

Mass Housing, Home Improvement Loan Program

Mass Housing is the state's affordable housing bank. They lend money at rates below the conventional market to support affordable rental and home ownership opportunities for low- and moderate-income residents of Massachusetts. The Home Improvement Loan Program provides funds to make

general, non-luxury improvements to your property, which include necessary home modifications. For info go to www.masshousing.com or phone 617-854-1000.

Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission Adaptive Housing Program

MRC's Adaptive Housing Program's goal is to provide accessible housing to individuals with disabilities in their primary, permanent residence to enhance their ability to participate in vocational services, and to return to work.

The Adaptive Housing Program provides architectural modifictions to the private residences of individuals and related equipment installation to remove impairment related barriers to occupancy by the individual. Examples of modifications that may be eligible under this program are wheelchair access via lifts, ramps, door widening, or bathroom modifications such as roll in showers or grab bars. For more information, please contact Eugene Blumkin at 617-204-3721 or Eugene.Blumkin@MRC.state.ma.us

Housing in Massachusetts is expensive and it is often a person's largest monthly expense. Obtaining financial assistance for housing can take years, but if you think you will need it, you might want to get on waitlists. There are both state and federal programs that subsidize housing for people who have low income. In most cases, recipients of housing subsidies pay 30% of their gross income towards rent and the government pays the remainder.

The Department of Housing and Community Development's (DHCD) Guide to Obtaining Housing Assistance explains subsidized housing in more detail. It also provides contact information for local housing authorities. For more information, go to **https://www.mass.gov/guides/a-guide-to-obtaining-housing-assistance**

Winthrop Housing Authority

To apply for state-aided Family and Elderly/ Handicapped public housing, you must use the Common Housing Application for Massachusetts Public Housing (CHAMP).

You can apply using CHAMP either online at our CHAMP website, or in person by completing a printed paper application. The Local Housing Authority will process your CHAMP Application based on the information you provide.

This information must be complete and accurate for your application to be processed and to be placed on a waitlist. To learn more about how to apply for public housing, go to https://publichousingapplication.ocd.state.ma.us/help

You can contact the Winthrop Housing Authority for more assistance.
9 GOLDEN DRIVE
WINTHROP, MA 02152
617-846-7100
https://www.town.winthrop.ma.us/housing-authority

Section 8

The housing choice voucher program is the federal government's major program for assisting very low-income families, the elderly, and the disabled to afford decent, safe, and sanitary housing in the private market. Since housing assistance is provided on behalf of the family or individual, participants are able to find their own housing, including single-family homes, townhouses and apartments. For more information, go to http://www.section8listmass.org

Alternative Housing Voucher Program

A state issued housing voucher, Alternative Housing Voucher Program, is available to people with disabilities who are eligible for elderly/disabled housing but are not elderly. For more information, go to https://www.mass.gov/service-details/alternative-housing-voucher-program-ahvp

CHAPA

The Citizens' Housing and Planning Association (CHAPA) provides a useful Housing Search Guide for People with Disabilities in Massachusetts. Most of the information is also helpful to people who have low-income.

MyMassHome has listings of homes being sold below market rate at discounted prices for income-eligible households. Many of these homes are not advertised through traditional real estate websites.

Search MyMassHome listings by location, price, number of bedrooms, or accessibility status to find the affordable homeownership opportunity that meets your needs and budget. Go to **https://www.chapa.org/housing-and-courses**

Autism Housing Pathways (AHP)

Autism Housing Pathways works to educate families in Massachusetts about housing options for adults with developmental disabilities. AHP was created to provide information, support and resources for families who seek to create secure, supported housing for their adult children with disabilities.

Autism Housing Pathways seeks to foster education and awareness and disseminate information about the creation of self-directed housing for individuals with autism and other developmental disabilities; to promote and support the formation and maintenance of such housing; and to assist families in creating

self-directed housing for their adult children that supports their residential, recreational and community needs. To learn more about AHP, go to **https://autismhousingpathways.org/about/**

Mass Housing

MassHousing is an independent, quasi-public agency created in 1966 and charged with providing financing for affordable housing in Massachusetts. The Agency raises capital by selling bonds and lends the proceeds to low- and moderate-income homebuyers and homeowners, and to developers who build or preserve affordable and/or mixed-income rental housing. Since its inception, MassHousing has provided more than $27 billion for affordable housing. For more information, go to **https://www.masshousing.com/about**

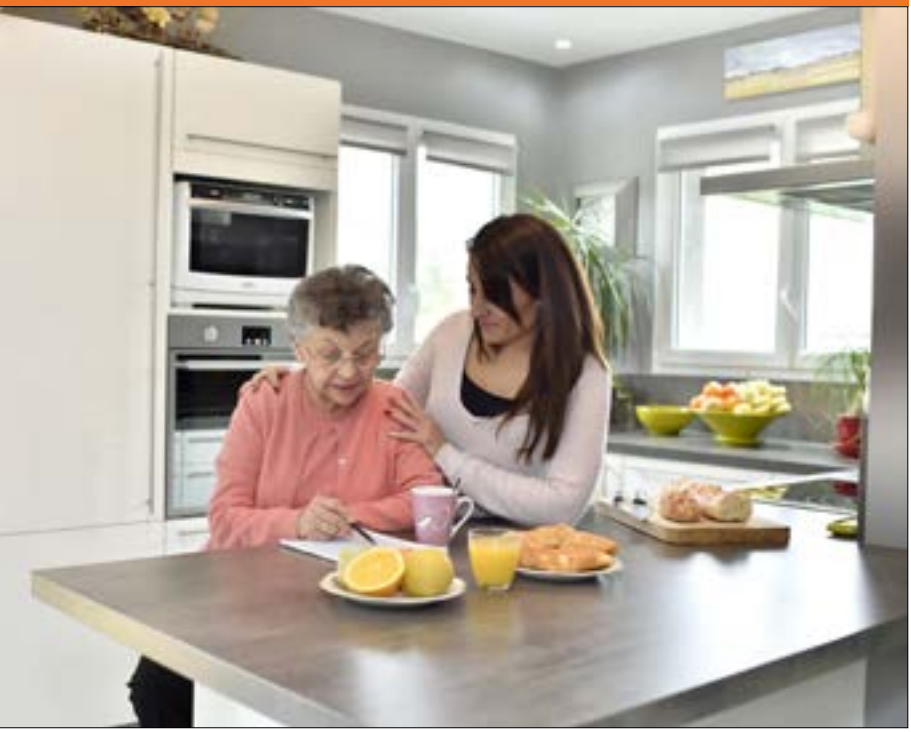
INDEPENDENT LIVING CENTERS

Independent Living Centers (ILCs) are private, nonprofit, consumer-controlled organizations providing services and advocacy by and for people with all types of disabilities. They create opportunities and help you achieve your greatest level of independent living within your family or community.

Centers for Independent Living help people with disabilities reach their goals through peer counseling, skills training, advocacy, and information and referral. Centers may also provide a range of other services such as housing referrals, communication help, support groups, transportation, health information and much more. They also serve as a strong consumer voice on a wide range of national, state and local issues.

The ILC which serves Winthrop is the Boston Center for Independent Living (BCIL), 60 Temple Place, 5th Floor, Boston, MA 02111.

BCIL is a frontline civil rights organization led by people with disabilities that advocates to eliminate discrimination, isolation and segregation by providing advocacy, information and referral, peer support, skills training, PCA services, and transitional services in order to enhance the independence of people with disabilities. You can learn more about BCIL at **https://bostoncil.org/** or call 617-338-6665 | TTY: 617-338-6662.



Aging Service Access Points (ASAPs)

ASAPs can provide needs assessment, care management and in home services to seniors and people with disabilities over 60 who need help with activities of daily living (such as bathing, eating, dressing) in their home. The consumer's share of the cost for these services is based on their income. ASAPs can also refer you to other services that may be useful and may offer caregiver support.

Winthrop's local ASAP is Mystic Valley Elder Services, Inc., 300 Commercial Street, Suite #19
Malden, MA 02148, (781) 324-7705, Web: http://www.mves.org

Home Care Assistance Program

People with disabilities under the age of 60 can potentially receive homemaker services from the Home Care Assistance Program, including housekeeping, laundry, grocery shopping, medication pickup, and meal supports.

The Home Care Assistance Program is a program of the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission. To see if you are eligible for the program and to apply, go to **https://www.mass.gov/home-care-assistance-program-under-60**

Personal Care Attendant (PCA) Program

The MassHealth Personal Care Attendant (PCA) program is for people who are on MassHealth or CommonHealth and who need assistance with at least two activities of daily living. A person is evaluated by a personal care management agency to determine how much assistance they need performing various daily living tasks and they are subsequently allotted a specific number of hours per week of paid assistance.

The individual then hires and trains PCAs and decides on their schedule based on the number of hours allotted. MassHealth pays the PCAs and all of the administrative pieces (taxes, payroll, unemployment) are taken care of by a third party.

For a list of agencies that provide PCA services, go to **https://www.mass.gov/service-details/personal-care-management-pcm-agency-list**

Adult Foster Care (AFC)

AFC clients are adults over the age of 16 with chronic illnesses or disabilities who are unable to live safely alone and require help with their daily personal care needs. Clients live in the private homes of qualified caregivers (who may in fact be a family member) and have the support of professional staff. The goal is to keep clients in their communities so they can continue to grow and thrive.

Clients must be eligible for MassHealth and must need assistance with at least one of the following Activities of Daily Living (ADLs):

- Walking
- Dressing
- Toileting
- Eating
- Bathing
- Transferring

For more information on AFC and to find a provider near Winthrop, go to **https://massafc.org/**

There are federal and state laws regarding disability discrimination. These laws include:

- **The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)** — The primary federal civil rights law designed to provide a clear and comprehensive national mandate for the elimination of discrimination and clear, strong, consistent, and enforceable standards for addressing discrimination of persons with disabilities.

- **Section 504 of the Rehab Act of 1973** - a federal law which protects individuals with disabilities from being excluded from, denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination by entities that receive federal funds. Federal agencies that provide funding typically have their own regulations that specifically describe how the entities they fund must ensure non-discrimination.

- **Mass. General Law Chp. 151b** - State law that prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities in matters of employment or housing.

- **Mass General Law Chp. 272** - Several sections of this chapter of state law prohibit discrimination against individuals in places of public accommodation.

- **Executive Order 592** affirmed the Commonwealth's commitment to non-discrimination, diversity, and equal opportunity in all aspects of state employment, programs, services, activities, and decisions. It also established specific policies and procedures to achieve this goal.

The Massachusetts Office on Disability (MOD)

MOD can help you understand how disability laws and regulations may or may not apply in your situation, including your rights and responsibilities. MOD focuses on answering questions around barriers to participation for people with disabilities. While they do not write the laws or enforce them, they do their best to recommend appropriate options for addressing an issue.

If you believe that your rights are being violated, please contact the Massachusetts Office on Disability (MOD) at **https://www.mass.gov/orgs/massachusetts-office-on-disability** or call 617-727-7440

Disability Law Center (DLC)

DLC is committed to protecting the civil and human rights of ALL persons with disabilities through zealous advocacy and representation. Its work is firmly rooted in the belief that everyone deserves to be treated with respect and dignity. The guiding principles for DLC's advocacy are to promote and protect inclusion, independence, integration, and equal opportunity. For more information, go to **https://www.dlc-ma.org**

Mass Legal Services (MLS)

MLS provides resources regarding the rights and services for those individuals with a range of physical and/or mental disabilities. They provide resources for individuals with cognitive impairment, developmental disabilities, autism, head injury, mental health diagnoses, and behavioral/emotional/social difficulties.

The website has information regarding the rights of individuals with disabilities, such as the right to be free from discrimination and abuse. It also has information regarding accessing supports and services for such individuals from public and private entities, such as accessing services from the Department of Mental Health or the Department of Developmental Disabilities. For more information, go to **https://www.masslegalservices.org**

Mental Health Legal Advisors Committee

Mental Health Legal Advisors Committee (MHLAC) works to protect the rights of people diagnosed with mental health conditions. They provide information, advice, and direct representation on a range of issues related to mental health. **https://mhlac.org**

Health Law Advocates

Health Law Advocates (HLA) is a public interest law firm whose mission is to provide free legal representation to people with limited income who are experiencing difficulty accessing or paying for needed medical services. **https://www.healthlawadvocates.org**

Fair Employment Project

The Fair Employment Project counsels Massachusetts workers with limited income about their rights on the job and the legal process. http://www.fairemploymentproject.org

Committee for Public Counsel Services

Committee for Public Counsel Services (CPCS) is the state's public defender's office. They provide representation to people with limited income in criminal, mental health commitment, guardianship, child welfare, and other legal matters. https://www.publiccounsel.net

Finding the Right Doctor

There are seemingly endless types of doctors, and if you don't work in the medical field, it can be a little difficult to determine what they do and which type you need to see. Add in all of the hard-to-understand medical terminology, and it's no surprise if you're feeling overwhelmed and even a little lost.

But you don't have to try to figure it out alone. Family medicine specialist Neha Vyas, MD, explains some of the most common types of doctors and what they do, including the kinds of conditions they treat. To read Dr. Vyas' article, "30 Types of Doctors and What They Do," go to https://health.clevelandclinic.org/types-of-doctors/?utm_source=feedotter&utm_medium=e-mail&utm_campaign=FO-04-07-2023&utm_

Mass Match

Requipment is a durable medical equipment (DME) re-use program offering free refurbished wheelchairs, scooters, shower chairs and more to adults, children and elders living in Massachusetts. Search our inventory and request items you need. Go to **https://dmereuse.org/**

To learn more about medical equipment and coverage by Medicare, go to **https://www.caremassachusetts.org/services/a8_about_home_medical_equipment.htm**

Also check out the Technology section of this guide for more information about devices and systems that support non-medical disabilities as well as a disability caused by a medical condition.

The Department of Mental Health (DMH)

DMH Adult Services focuses on community-based supports which enable individuals receiving treatment to recover and thrive in their communities. Services include case management, Adult Community Clinical Services, Programs of Assertive Community Treatment (PACT), Respite, Clubhouses, Recovery Learning Communities (RLCs), crisis stabilization units, and homelessness services.

24/7 Support is available by calling or texting 833-773-2445

The Massachusetts Behavioral Health Help Line (BHHL) can connect you directly to clinical help, when and where you need it. Even if you're not sure what kind of help or treatment you may need, we can help guide you.

- Call or text 833-773-2445
- Live chat available at: **https://www.masshelpline.com**
- Available 24 hours per day, 7 days per week, 365 days per year (including holidays)
- It's free, confidential, and no health insurance is required.
- Real-time interpretation in 200+ languages
- Deaf or hard of hearing? Contact MassRelay at 711

Clubhouse Services are programs that provide individuals people with mental health needs with support services to develop skills in social networking, independent living, budgeting, accessing transportation, self-care, maintaining educational goals, and securing and retaining employment. Clubhouses help people live a productive and stable life in the community. They are funded, in part, by the Department of Mental Health. https://www.massclubs.org

The National Alliance on Mental Illness of Massachusetts (NAMI Massachusetts)

NAMI is a nonprofit grassroots organization founded in 1982. Its mission is to improve the quality of life for people living with mental health conditions, their families, and their caregivers. They work to ensure that all people impacted by a mental health condition receive the support they need when they need it. We use our voices as people and families with lived experience to challenge discrimination and advocate for a more equitable and just world.

NAMI Mass envisions a society that humanizes the experience of mental health challenges, promotes the values of respect, agency, self-determination, non-coercion, and non-violence, and supports individuals and families wherever they are in their journey of healing and recovery. For more information, go to https://namimass.org/nami-mass-overview.

WINARC

WINARC is a local organization that provides recreational opportunities for people with disabilities. There are weekly activities as well as seasonal ones. For more information, contact WINARC at **WINARC1@gmail.com**

Winthrop Strong

Winthrop Strong is a chapter of Mass Advocates Standing Strong. It is an advocacy group for people with disabilities and assists them in learning about their rights. It also provides social activities with an

educational focus. For more information, contact Susan Carr at 857-201-9012 or Karla Murphy at 617-240-2488.

Winthrop Parks & Recreation

Winthrop Parks & Rec provides summer and after school programming. https://winthropma.myrec.com/info/default.aspx

Council on Aging

Winthrop's Council on Aging offers many activities for Winthrop residents aged 60 and over including art classes, exercise classes, yoga, computer literacy, and information sessions on a variety of topics. Check out their calendar at https://www.town.winthrop.ma.us/council-aging

Piers Park Adaptive Sailing

The Adaptive Sailing Program at Piers Park Sailing Center is a nationally recognized program. They have worked with over 2,800 people with disabilities since the program's inception. US Sailing has awarded PPSC Best Community Program for Disabled Sailors and PPSC maintains its status as an accredited US SAILING Adaptive Sailing Center, one of fewer than 10 across the country. For more information about the Adaptive Sailing Program, go to https://piersparksailing.org/adaptive/adaptive-sailing

Greater Massachusetts Special - Needs Events

This is a must for families! The website provides listings of events and activities for families with special needs & disabilities in greater Massachusetts.

They share local family-friendly disability conferences, workshops, speaker events, accessible and adaptive recreation programs and much more. For more information, go to **https://www.spedchildmass.com**

Partners for Youth with Disabilities

PYD programs all provide youth and young adults with disabilities with three key things: self-confidence, community, and purpose. We build disability pride, leadership skills, healthy relationship skills, community involvement, and ensure that youth are successful in school and in seeking employment.

We currently run programs focusing on mentoring, career readiness, theater arts, and leadership development. These programs largely serve youth in the Greater Boston area, but our mentoring program has an online component that is open to young adults from across the United States. For more information about PYD, go to **https://www.pyd.org/programs**

Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) Association of MA

Our nationwide network of ALS Association chapters and other partners provide people living with ALS and their family and loved ones with localized support in communities across the country. The professionals in this network offer many care and support programs that were designed with one thing in mind – enhancing quality of life and supporting families impacted by ALS. For more information, go to www.als.org/massachusetts

Connective Tissue Coalition

We aim to drive research, raise awareness, and provide resources for those affected by Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome(s), Marfan Syndrome, and Loeys-Dietz Syndrome through governmental and official funding sources. We strive to initiate medical research while collaborating with patients, medical, educational, and research communities to improve the quality of life of those affected by these connective tissue disorders. We are committed to being a transparent and reliable source of up-to-date information and support for individuals and families living with these conditions and hope for those living with undiagnosed connective tissue disease to be correctly diagnosed. For more information, go to https://www.connectivetissuecoalition.org

DeafBlind Extended Supports (DBES) Unit

DBES provides services to consumers who are DeafBlind and or legally blind with cognitive issues, via counselors who are skilled in the basic use of American Sign Language (ASL) and or a variety of alternate communication methods. Services include vocational, prevocational and social day programs, respite, adaptive equipment, low vision aides, flex funding, etc. Residential placement may be an option for those DeafBlind consumers who are turning 22 and MCB is identified as the lead agency for adult services. For more information, please contact Lesli Baker Johnson, Director of DeafBlind Extended Supports (DBES) at Lesli.Baker.Johnson@mass.gov

Department of Developmental Disabilities

The Department's mission is to create, in partnership with others, innovative and genuine opportunities for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities to participate fully in their communities and meaningfully engage as valued members. DDS works with adults to connect them with an array of employment and day program supports, community living and other residential aid, and family support. DDS works with children to provide family support and supplement educational services through specialized programs.

Services are individualized and planned using a person-centered approach. For more information about DDS services please go to https://www.mass.gov/orgs/department-of-developmental-services

Massachusetts Commission for the Blind

Massachusetts Commission for the Blind serves more than 30,000 residents of the Commonwealth who are legally blind by providing access to employment opportunities and social rehabilitation with the goal of increasing independence and full community participation. For more information go to **https://www.mass.gov/orgs/massachusetts-commission-for-the-blind**

Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (MCDHH)

MCDHH provides accessible communication, education, and advocacy to consumers and private and public entities so that programs, services, and opportunities throughout Massachusetts are fully accessible to persons who are deaf and hard of hearing. Our Vision is a Commonwealth where universal access is the standard for ensuring that Deaf and hard of hearing people fully participate in all areas of life. The estimated number of Deaf and hard of hearing is 20% of the general population. For more information, go to **https://www.mass.gov/orgs/massachusetts-commission-for-the-deaf-and-hard-of-hearing** MCDHH is checking Voicemail and SignMail messages left on our main numbers: Voice (617) 740-1600 and Video Phone: (617) 326-7546. We will respond within one business day.

Massachusetts Down Syndrome Congress

For nearly four decades, the Massachusetts Down Syndrome Congress has fought to ensure that all individuals in Massachusetts with Down syndrome are valued, included, and given every opportunity to pursue fulfilling lives. Today, MDSC has 5,000 members, a professional Board of Directors, a dynamic Management Team, and a vision to ensure that every person with Down syndrome has the opportunity to reach his or her full potential. Our broad array of programs, our four Centers of Excellence and our comprehensive Resource Library, serve people with Down syndrome throughout their lifespans; and families throughout the state and beyond, putting MDSC on the cutting edge of Down syndrome advocacy nationwide. For more information, go to **https://mdsc.org/about-us**

MassOptions

MassOptions provides a personalized service connecting elders, individuals with disabilities, and their caregivers with information on direct services that can best meet their needs. For more information, go to **https://www.massoptions.org/massoptions/About-MassOptions**

Multiple Sclerosis Society, Greater New England Chapter

The Greater New England Chapter works to improve the quality of life for people affected by MS in Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Vermont,

and raise funds for critical MS research. Join the movement toward a world free of MS. For more information, go to www.nationalmssociety.org/Chapters/MAM or call (800) 344-4467.

Muscular Dystrophy Association

Muscular Dystrophy Association (MDA) is the #1 voluntary health organization in the United States for people living with muscular dystrophy, ALS, and related neuromuscular diseases.

For over 70 years, MDA has led the way in accelerating research, advancing care, and advocating for the support of our families. MDA's mission is to empower the people we serve to live longer, more independent lives. For more information, go to www.mda.org or call Greater Boston - Boston (617) 368-9155.

The Program of All-inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE)

PACE is administered by MassHealth and Medicare to provide a wide range of medical, social, recreational, and wellness services to eligible participants. You do not need to be on MassHealth to enroll in PACE. However, if you meet the income and asset guidelines, you may be eligible for MassHealth and MassHealth may pay your PACE premium.

Neighborhood PACE, a program of the East Boston Neighborhood Health Center, serves adults living

in Winthrop. As part of the national Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE) network, we provide the comprehensive care and support that you need as an individual with specific needs and preferences.

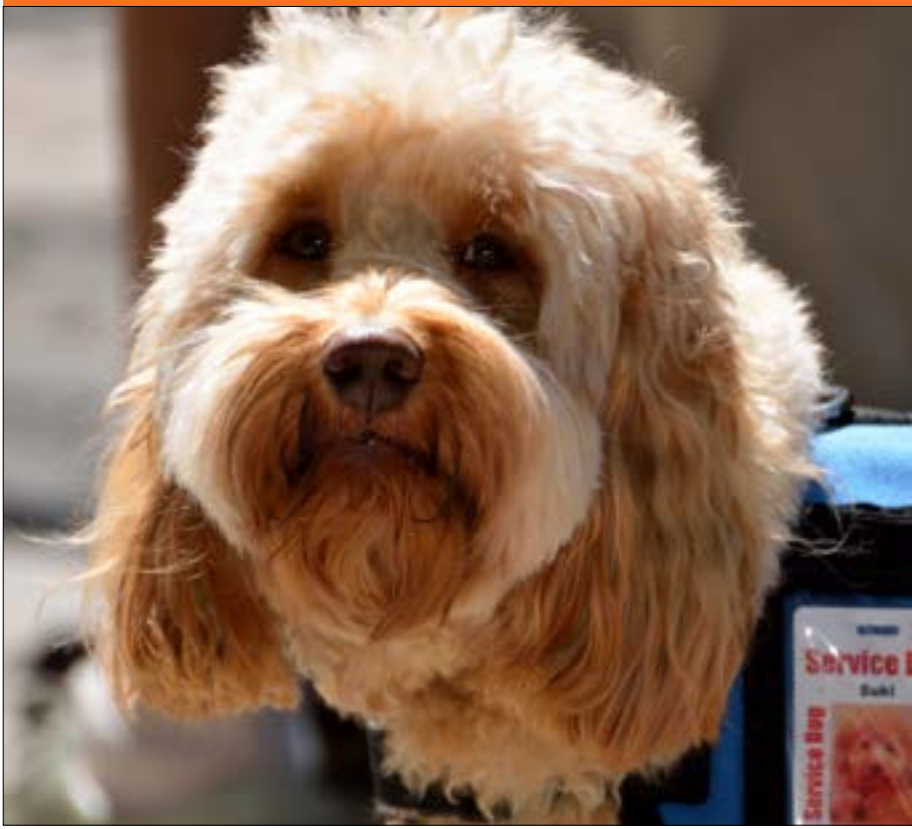
Our program is the ideal solution for those who want an alternative to nursing home care for the right combination of medical, social, recreation, rehabilitation, home care, and other services. We even provide medications without co-pay and transportation to each PACE Center and medical appointments. For more information, go to **https://neighborhoodpace.org/pe/** or call 617-568-6377.

The Spina Bifida Association of Greater New England ("SBAGNE") is a nonprofit 501(c)3 corporation founded in 1971 by a group of concerned parents of children with Spina Bifida. Today, we are an affiliated chapter of the National Spina Bifida Association. For 50 years, we have worked hard to support, connect, and empower individuals and families living in New England with Spina Bifida. For more information, go to **www.sbagreaterne.org** or call (888) 479-1900.

United Cerebral Palsy of Metro Boston (UCP)

For over 70 years, UCP has provided supports and services to individuals with cerebral palsy and other physical, developmental and intellectual disabilities and issues of aging, promoting the full inclusion in all aspects of society. We join over 65 affiliates within the United States and abroad who strive to ensure the full inclusion of people with disabilities in every facet of society. For more information, go to UCP of Metro Boston www.ucpboston.org

SERVICE ANIMALS AND EMOTIONAL SUPPORT ANIMALS



People with disabilities have the right to be accompanied by their service animal anywhere the public is allowed to go. In housing, people with disabilities have a right to request reasonable accommodations, including keeping an assistance animal (a service animal or emotional support animal). When we talk about animals that help a person with a disability, we generally use the definition of disability from the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). This defines disability broadly as a physical or mental

impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities.

Note that many disabilities are not obvious, and an individual may choose to be quite selective about who they mention their disability to. Sometimes an individual will need to indicate that they have a disability to assert their disability rights, however they do not need to discuss their diagnosis.

The Massachusetts Service Animal Law limits the definition of service animal to a dog that assists an individual with a sensory and/or physical disability. Federal law allows for a broader definition of service animals under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Only dogs and miniature horses can be service animals.
Examples of service animal tasks include:

- Guiding a person who is blind
- Alerting a person who is deaf
- Interrupting a compulsive behavior
- Retrieving objects

The ADA service animal definition includes psychiatric service dogs that are trained to recognize and respond to psychiatric disability symptoms. For example, a dog who is trained to help its owner with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) avoid environmental triggers to their disability symptoms would be considered a psychiatric service animal.

Although there are rigorous, formal service animal training programs, these can be expensive and the ADA gives individuals with disabilities the right to train their animal themselves. This means that after their animal has been successfully trained to consistently do at least one task, they can start referring to their dog as a service animal. They can continue training their dog to perform other tasks.

Service animals may also provide emotional support, but their defining feature is their training to do specific work tasks.

What is an emotional support animal?

An emotional support animal (ESA) is an animal that provides emotional support to a person with a disability, just by its presence.

An animal does not need to have been trained to be considered an ESA. However, individuals may find it useful to do socialization training with ESAs that will encounter other people, as the owner is responsible for their animal's behavior.

Service animals:

- Are permitted to go wherever their handler is permitted to go.
- Must be under the handler's control at all times. In most cases this involves use of a harness or leash.
- Must be housebroken.
- May not pose a legitimate, direct threat to health or safety.
- Are allowed even if others have fears of or allergies to dogs.
- Do not have to be allowed to sit on furniture meant for patrons, to eat from plates provided by a food service establishment, or to ride in shopping carts.

Are you considering a service dog for your needs? Read this article first! **https://www.epmagazine.com/blog/should-i-consider-having-a-service-dog**

SUPPORT GROUPS

Council on Aging

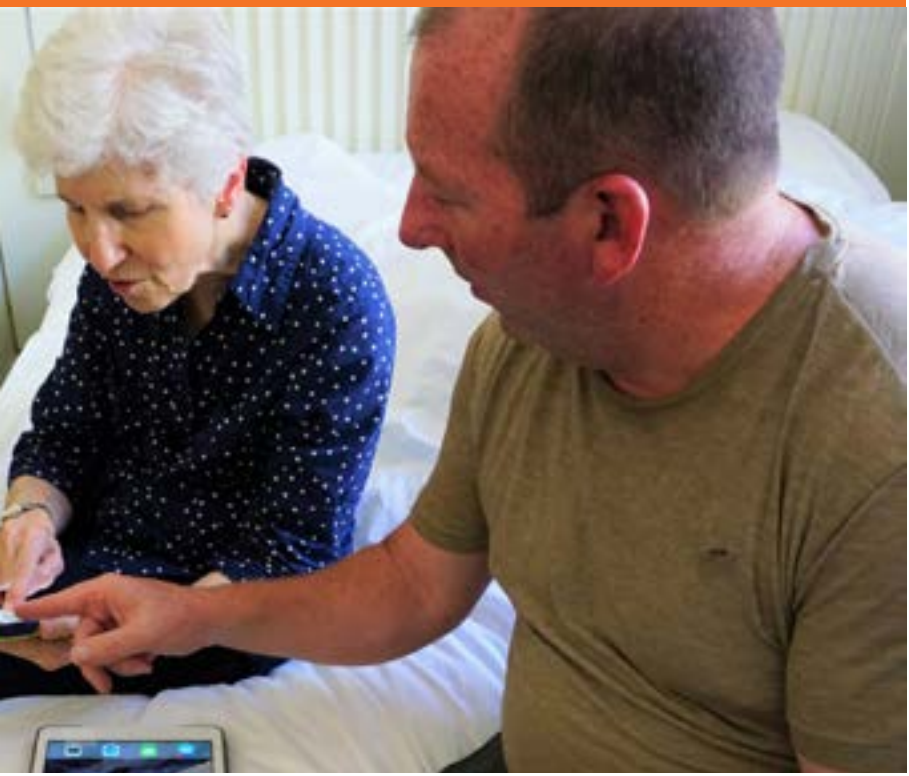
There are many support groups offered through the Council on Aging, including a Low Vision Group and a Bereavement and Caregiver Support Group. Check their calendar for more information at https://www.town.winthrop.ma.us/council-aging

Ehlers-Danlos and Connective Tissue Disorder New England/Massachusetts Support Group

http://www.ctdnewengland.org

Other Support Groups

Check out the Service Agencies for Individuals with Disabilities section of this guide. Most agencies offer local support groups or can refer you to a local chapter.



The Massachusetts Assistive Technology Loan Program (ATLP)

ATLP provides low-interest loans to qualified people with disabilities and their families to purchase assistive technology devices and services that will help them lead more independent lives. If you are not financially eligible for home modifications under the HMLP, you may be able to apply to the ATLP. Contact: Leonidas Tonevski at 1-800-244-2756 ext.428 or 431 TTY 1-800-564-9700 or https://www.mass.gov/doc/atlppdf/download

MassMatch

MassMatch provides links to search for assistive technology and medical equipment available for sale or for free, as well as information on low interest loans for assistive technology. It provides information on how people can find, try, borrow, fund and buy AT devices. The program is federally funded and managed by the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission. https://www.massmatch.org

Massachusetts Alternative Finance Loan Program (MAFLP)

Massachusetts Alternative Finance Loan Program (MAFLP) provides alternative financing options to qualified people with disability and their families. There are three loan programs:

- Long Term Device Loan – free long-term loans of assistive technology devices valued less than $500. Available to individuals/families who are financially eligible.
- Mini Loan: Zero interest loans of $100-$2,000 for the purchase of assistive technology products and services. Any items defined as assistive technology are allowed.
- Financial Loan: Low-interest loans of $2,000 or more for the purchase of assistive technology products and services. Any items defined as assistive technology are allowed.

Contact Easter Seals of Massachusetts at 800-244-2756 X431 or 800-564-9700 (TTY).

Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing has information on assistive technology for people with deafness or hearing loss. For more information call 617-740-1600.

Massachusetts Equipment Distribution Program (MassEDP)

If you are a Massachusetts resident with a permanent disability that in most circumstances limits your ability to use the telephone effectively you may be eligible to receive assistive telephone equipment / adaptive communication equipment at a reduced rate. Under the program, equipment is available to individuals

who have cognitive, hearing, motion, speech or vision impairments. Call 800-300-5658 for application form. Visit Massachusetts Equipment Distribution Program (MassEDP) at https://www.mass.gov/massachusetts-equipment-distribution-program-massedp

Assistive Technology Regional Centers

Assistive Technology Regional Centers are operating in western, central and eastern Massachusetts; visit them to learn about, try out or borrow assistive technology. Our center for Winthrop is ATRC-Boston operated by Easter Seals MA located at 89 South Street, Boston, MA 02111
Phone: 617-226-2640 or 800-244-2756
Email: ATRCBoston@eastersealsma.org

Get AT Stuff

Get AT Stuff Massachusetts is an assistive technology exchange website. Here visitors can shop for used equipment or advertise what they are no longer using.
https://getatstuff.massmatch.org

The Ride

The RIDE paratransit service provides door-to-door, shared-ride public transportation to people who can't use the subway, bus, or trolley all or some of the time due to temporary or permanent disability.

The RIDE is available year-round in 58 cities and towns in the greater Boston area, with similar operating hours to the MBTA—generally from 5 AM to 1 AM daily.

Customers schedule their trips on The RIDE one to five days in advance and are given a pick-up window for their ride's arrival. Travel times are comparable to the same trip taken on fixed-route transit (bus, subway, or trolley) plus an additional 20 minutes. Like other public transit services, The RIDE is a shared service, so you'll travel with other customers going in the same general direction.

Paratransit, like other public transportation services, may not meet all the needs of people with disabilities, and it does not function as medical or human service transportation.

For more information, go to **https://www.mbta.com/accessibility/the-ride**

The RIDE Flex

The RIDE Flex is a flexible, on-demand travel option for eligible RIDE customers. The RIDE is the MBTA's paratransit service for people who can't use the subway, bus, or trolley all or some of the time due to temporary or permanent disability. The RIDE Flex grew out of a pilot project and doesn't replace The RIDE. It just gives you more options when planning your trips. Flex customers can schedule trips at any time directly with providers Uber and Lyft. They can schedule their ride at any time just like other Uber

and Lyft riders. The current cost per trip is $3; the rest of the fare up to $40 is subsidized by the MBTA. For more information, go to https://www.mbta.com/accessibility/the-ride/the-ride-flex

Van Transportation Program / Winthrop Council on Aging

The Senior Van operates Tuesday - Thursday between 9am and 3pm. Reservations are on a first come, first served basis. Medical rides will be prioritized. Extra stops will be an additional price and must be scheduled in advance by calling the Senior Center at 617-846-8538. Prices range from $3 to $14 depending on the destination.

Grocery shopping: the Senior Van is available for grocery shopping trips at 9am Monday-Thursday to

either Market Basket or Stop & Shop. The van is also available at 1pm on Wednesday to go to Stop & Shop only.

All riders must have emergency contact information on file with the Senior Center in order to ride on the Senior Van. This information can be provided over the phone when scheduling your first ride. For more information, go to **https://www.town.winthrop.ma.us/council-aging/pages/van-transportation-program**

Funding Sources for Vehicle Modification

If an individual is working on employment goals with Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission, some support for vehicle modification may be possible if required for employment.

Otherwise, some financial help may be available through:

- Easter Seals assistive technology loan program
- Rebates from the manufacturer of a new vehicle for people who are going to modify it after purchase
- Sales and excise tax exemptions for people with certain limitations:

Massachusetts Automobile Excise Tax Exemption

Vehicle excise tax exemption for a person who has suffered loss or permanent loss of use of both legs or both arms or loss of vision of both eyes to a

certain degree. The exemption applies to one motor vehicle per person, owned and registered for their personal, noncommercial use. Applications for excise tax exemptions are available from the local town assessor's office.

Massachusetts Automobile Sales Tax Exemption

Exemption from purchase and use tax of a vehicle for a disabled person who is the original registered owner of the motor vehicle and has lost two or more limbs or has permanent loss of use of at least 80% of two or more limbs. Parents and others who transport people with disabilities may also be entitled to this exemption. A wheelchair lift used to make a van accessible may also be exempt even if purchased separately from the vehicle. In cases where the lift is purchased after the van, a physician's prescription may be needed to document this exemption. For more information contact:

Department of Revenue, Customer Service Bureau: (800) 392-6089, TTY: (617) 887-6140

Mass. Registry of Motor Vehicles, Medical Affairs: (617) 351-9222, TTY: (877) 768-8833

Veterans' Service Officer (VSO)

VSOs help veterans and families connect with benefits. VSOs are available to anyone seeking information or assistance in veterans' benefits and services, including family members of veterans, interview applicants, determine eligibility, and administer veterans' benefits. The mission of the Winthrop Veterans Service Office is to advocate for our Veterans and their family, providing access to services on the local, state, and federal levels to which they are eligible.

We assist in job searching, obtaining health care, applying for a service-connected disability, and much more.

We urge all Veterans to stop in and see what they are entitled to! Yearly this office facilitates the Memorial Day and Veterans Day events, as well as support various organizations which assist Veterans. Winthrop's VSO is Phil Ronan. You can reach the Service Office at (617) 846-3065 or pronan@town.winthrop.ma.us

Department of Veteran's Affairs

Veterans with service disabilities can receive funds to modify their homes. The Specially Adapted Housing Program allows veterans with a service-related disability to receive a grant of not more than 50% of the cost of specially adapted housing unit or to a max of $60,000.

The funds may be used to build, buy or modify a home. For more information call 800-827-1000.

Homes for Our Troops

Homes for Our Troops is a non-profit, non-partisan, 501 (c)(3) organization founded in 2004. The organization assists severely injured Servicemen and Women and their immediate families by raising donations of money, building materials and professional labor and then coordinating the process of building a new home or adapting an existing home for accessibility. (Toll free) 1-866-7-TROOPS www.homesforourtroops.org

Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP)

Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) specialists develop job and training opportunities for veterans, with special emphasis on veterans with service-connected disabilities.

DVOP specialists provide direct services to Veterans to help them compete in the job market. They aid disabled and other veterans by promoting community and employer support for job and training opportunities, including apprenticeship and on-the-job training.

DVOP specialists link veterans with jobs and training opportunities by working with:

- Employers
- Veterans' organizations
- The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
- The U.S. Department of Defense
- Community-based organizations

DVOP specialists are case managers for veterans enrolled in federally funded job training programs such as the Department of Veterans Affairs' Vocational Rehabilitation program, and other veterans with serious disadvantages in the job market. DVOP specialists are available to those veterans and their employers to ensure follow-up services are provided to promote job retention.

These specialists are located in MassHire Career Centers across the state.

For more information, contact MassHire Department of Career Services at (617) 626-5300 or go to https://www.mass.gov/orgs/masshire-department-of-career-services

Veteran's Independence Plus Program (VIP)

Veteran's Independence Plus Program (VIP) supports veterans of any age that are at risk of nursing home placement and their family caregivers by providing home and community-based services to enable them to continue to live in their homes and communities.

Eligible veterans receive a comprehensive assessment, develop a service plan, and can purchase goods and services that best meet their needs. VIP is jointly administered by the Executive Office of Elder Affairs and the Department of Veterans' Services.

For more information, go to https://mves.org/veterans-quality-reliable-home-care-is-available-regardless-of-age

Notes

Notes

THOSE WHO CAN FOR THOSE IN NEED

Life presents its challenges,
and we are not always ready for them.

They can knock us down or off-balance creating
stress, fear, depression, and even isolation.

Our organization will get you started on the road to
finding support, relief, and hope.

Our resources cover the elderly, children, low income,
homelessness, and losing a loved one.

Find help today!

For more information,
contact Judie VanKooiman
judie@twctin.org
617-462-5719
https://thosewhocanforthoseinneed.org

WINTHROP COMMISSION on DISABILITY

Town of Winthrop Massachusetts